

Conventional? Anti-Personnel? The Pentagon's Soap-Ad Semantics in Vietnam

"Saigon—The U.S. is assembling in South Vietnam a variety of what are described as 'sophisticated' conventional weapons. . . . One of these, an anti-personnel bomb called Lazy Dog, has already been used. It consists of a canister of fluted, razor-sharp pieces of very hard steel. In the words of one American, it is guaranteed 'to kill every liv-

ing thing above ground within a city block.' These bombs were used against suspected concentrations of Viet Cong Communist rebels which last week inflicted heavy losses on Government troops in Bin Dinh province of South Vietnam. They will be used in attacks on North Vietnam."

—Frank Robertson in *London Daily Telegraph*, Feb. 19.

I. F. Stone's Weekly

VOL. XIII, NO. 8

MARCH 1, 1965

101

WASHINGTON, D. C.

15 CENTS

What McNamara's Computers Refuse to See

In one sense there was no news in Secretary McNamara's annual report the other day on the new defense budget and our military posture. Everyone knows that nuclear war would be disastrous. But the fact seems to be stored away in the back of our minds like the population of Ceylon or the date of the Battle of Waterloo, an item for the World Almanac rather than a new reality never to be lost sight of. The very day McNamara made his report to the House Armed Services Committee, Senator Dirksen was marshalling the Senate's Republicans into martial array behind a tough policy in Asia, with the high rhetoric of a small boy reciting the Charge of the Light Brigade. We thought the last election reminded the Republicans that McKinley was dead. Now we find they—and a lot of Democrats, too—don't realize the horse cavalry has passed away.

The New Arithmetic of Death

Neither has the New Fact registered on McNamara either. He presented complex projections, computer style, showing that with an expenditure of \$25 billions by 1970 he could save 30 million lives in a nuclear war. Neither he nor anyone else rose to suggest that we could save several hundred million lives at far less cost by adjusting our diplomacy and our thinking to the reality of what a nuclear war would mean. The figures McNamara presented stupefy the imagination: an attack on our urban centers would kill 149 million people* and destroy three-fourths of our productive capacity. If the enemy gave us an hour's leeway between a first attack on missile bases and a second attack on urban centers, which McNamara thinks unlikely, we could reduce the number of our dead to 122 million. What should be the most sobering news of all is McNamara's testimony that "there is no defense program," however expensive and elaborate, "which could reduce fatalities to a level much below 80 million."

To any reasonable human being this means that we should no more risk resorting to nuclear war than to injecting ourselves and our children with the bubonic plague. But having told us how catastrophic nuclear war would be, McNamara turns around and tells us we have no alternative to pursuing the war in Vietnam. "Considering the great stakes involved in this struggle," McNamara testified, "I see no other alternative

* This use of 149 instead of 150 in such sweeping estimates fascinates us. Is this mathematics or merchandising?

Will No One Hear Her Plea?



This unforgettable picture, which AP's Wide World refused to sell us, carried a caption saying it showed a peasant woman, her child in her arms, pleading with a South Vietnamese soldier burning down a Viet Cong controlled village.

for the United States." We find McNamara's dogmatism puzzling. If all the great non-involved capitals of the world, from London and Paris to New Delhi and Tokyo, see negotiation as an alternative, it is hard to understand why this should be invisible to McNamara's otherwise perceptive eye. There is always time to blow up the world when and if negotiation fails. But this is not the only fallacy hidden in the way McNamara puts it. What are the "great stakes" involved? What greater stake than the preservation of the civilization we have built up? Is our stake in Saigon greater than our stake in New York or Detroit?

(Continued on Page Four)

Church Warns Against Applying Cold War Methods to Asia and Africa . . .

Senator CHURCH [*D., Id.*]*: I submit, with all deference to the State Department, that there has not yet been a consistent, clear-cut definition of the American purpose. . . . If our objective is to immunize southeast Asia from Chinese interest or activity, to dam off this part of the world from what has traditionally been a sphere of influence for China, then I say that our goal is unrealistic and foredoomed to failure, in the long course of events. . . . It would be as though the Chinese were to say to us, "Quit trying to assert a dominant interest in Mexico." . . .

Now, the best way to contain the power of Peiping is to ring China with independent, stable governments. I do not think that, in the long run, we shall be able to determine what the character of those governments will be. I do not believe that this matters so much as the independence of those governments. Therefore, I should think that it would be in the interest of the United States to begin to do in Asia what we have long been doing in Europe—recognizing that the satellite countries are restless, that they are not all alike, not dominated by the Kremlin to the same degree. . . . I cannot see why, in the face of what has happened to the Communist satellites in Europe, the same experience will not also occur in Asia.

Political Solution Unavoidable

Therefore, I should like to state that the struggle in southeast Asia is one which eventually must find a political rather than a military settlement. . . . We lost 157,000, dead and wounded, in Korea. The fighting cost us \$18 billion. But, in the end, we had to go to the conference table. . . .

Senator McGEE [*D., Wy.*]: When the chips were down in Western Europe, we did not say, 'We are ready to fight, but let us sit down and talk about it.' Instead, we served notice on Moscow that starting in Western Europe, with West Germany and in Berlin, we were ready to fight now if the Russians intended to move into these areas. . . . The consequence was that the Russians backed off. . . .

Senator CHURCH: I believe it is important to draw a sharp distinction between Europe and southeast Asia, and not to paint the picture in broad-brush strokes, as though there were no difference between Russian expansion after World War II and the kind of problem we are facing in the jungles of Viet-

* Congressional Record, February 17, pps. 2792-2812.

McNamara Contradicted: Expert Says Our Reprisal Raid Hit Mere Fishing Village

"Professor Bernard Fall, instructor in international relations at Howard University here, has been in Dong Hoi, North Vietnam, and last weekend cited various reasons why it could not be of military value. Dong Hoi was bombed by U.S. Navy jets on February 7. Fall is a French citizen.

"In a radio interview [ABC, Feb. 17] Fall noted that Dong Hoi is a small fishing village with only a small road leading out of it. Hours after the American bombing of Dong Hoi, Defense Secretary McNamara told a press conference Dong Hoi was a staging area for sending soldiers and supplies into South Vietnam.

"Fall stressed three facts which he said indicate Dong Hoi could not be a staging area. First, he pointed out that it has only the one small road. Secondly, it can be easily watched from the sea and also could be shelled from the

The Pacific's No Easy Ditch to Leap

"Another round of negotiations like 1954 and 1962 and we shall find ourselves negotiated right out of Asia and right into a really big war. If we do not man the ramparts of freedom on our outer defense line from Korea to South Vietnam, we shall inevitably be facing the enemy on the inner line from Alaska to Hawaii." —Sen. Dirksen, in the Senate, Feb. 18.

"Nothing has been said about the character of our problem in southeast Asia that so reflects how heat can substitute for light than the notion that South Vietnam is the last stand for the United States beyond the shores of Hawaii, or even the gates of Seattle. If there is nothing but a vacuum between Saigon and Seattle, indeed we are in a perilous situation; but I had thought that the American Navy dominated the Pacific, and I had thought that the Pacific Ocean was a sizeable moat to protect the security interests of the United States." —Sen. Church, in the Senate, Feb. 17.

nam today. . . . The reason why our policy has failed to produce the desired results in so many parts of Asia and Africa is that there is so different an attitude in Africa and Asia toward the Western World. These continents have just emerged from centuries of colonial bondage. . . . ["In many, if not most, of these emergent lands," Church said earlier that day, "it is capitalism not communism which is the ugly word. The very term evokes images of the old colonial plantation and white man supremacy. Furthermore any attempt to acquaint Africa and Asia with the miracles of modern capitalism . . . is relatively meaningless. The underdeveloped world lacks the private capital with which to industrialize. Government is often the only source available to underwrite development programs. Thus popular repugnance to capitalism combines with economic necessity to cause most of the new governments in Africa and Asia to proclaim themselves Socialist States."]

At the moment, the Chinese are not [in Vietnam]. They have not come down with their armies. They have not dropped the Bamboo Curtain on southeast Asia and backed it up with Chinese divisions. The war in Vietnam has been between North Vietnam and South Vietnam, to determine whether the country will be reunited, and under what kind of government. Thus far, most of the combatants have been South Vietnamese. . . . It has been essentially a civil war, even though aided and abetted from the north. What north are

sea—which would eliminate any military need for air strikes.

"And thirdly, a team of the International Control Commission was stationed in Dong Hoi at the time. If military activity was going on in this coastal village, Fall pointed out, it would easily be observed by the commission set up by the Geneva conference to oversee border agreements on Indochina. Fall noted that one member nation of the commission is Canada, a close ally of the United States, which certainly would report to this country any hostile military actions. Another member is India, which Fall called a 'friendly neutral' and the third is Poland. 'For the Communists to put depots in the path of the International Control Commission would be unlikely,' he said."

—York, Pa. Gazette and Daily, Feb. 19.

... Idea of A Berlin-Type Stand on 17th Parallel in Vietnam Called Delusion

we talking about? We are talking about Hanoi. The most significant help Peiping has given, thus far, is some Mig fighters, sent down recently. Most of the Chinese participation, so far, has been verbal service to the cause. There has been some instruction in the art of guerrilla warfare, but the Chinese are not in there in a physical sense, certainly not to the same degree that we are there in a physical sense.

I submit to the Senator from Wyoming that the Chinese doubtlessly desire the communization of Vietnam, but the method is insurrection, and the people involved in the subversive effort are Vietnamese. If we believe that a white Western nation can intervene and take over this kind of war, convert it into an American war, and then settle it in any durable way, I simply disagree. There are limits to what we can do in assisting a country which is gripped in insurrection involving brother against brother. . . .

Senator McGEE: The Senator from Idaho is so eloquent and well informed on this question that I am reluctant to press the matter further. . . . What I am saying to the Senator is not that I disagree with the imperativeness of negotiation, but I believe in negotiation at the right time, and that now is not that time. . . .

Korea's Painful Lesson

Senator CHURCH: Once the bombing goes further north, the danger increases that North Vietnam must respond; and the only means she has is on the ground. Saigon is obviously too weak to withstand such pressures. So the demand will follow for American ground troops. The last time we had a similar experience, this led to Chinese involvement. We can go down that road again, with all the attendant pain, cost and tragedy. But, in the end, we shall come back to the conference table, as we did in Korea, with China as well as North Vietnam to contend with; and large parts of southeast Asia in Chinese occupation.

I disagree with the Senator from Wyoming when he says that we should wait until some time later, until after the military situation has changed. It seems to me that, given a spreading war, the military situation will only worsen. So, I think we should combine our military effort in South Vietnam with an indicated willingness to negotiate. . . .

Senator McGEE: I believe we must announce and make it irrefutably clear that we draw a firm line along the 17th parallel—separating North Vietnam from South Vietnam;

"It Won't Be U.S. Senators Who Die"

"The Senator from Illinois [Dirksen] deplores the fact that Senator Church and I spoke 'in this chamber which echoes with the courageous words of brave men now gone.' Now, Mr. President, there are still brave men in the Senate, and the Senator from Illinois isn't the only one. It doesn't require any particular bravery to stand on the floor of the Senate and urge our boys in Vietnam to fight harder, and if this war mushrooms into a major conflict and a hundred thousand Americans are killed, it won't be U.S. Senators who die. It will be American soldiers who are too young to qualify for the U.S. Senate.

"It is just possible that it required more courage for the Senator from Idaho to lead off this debate than for the Senator from Illinois to try to squelch it. I don't intend to be squelched by innuendoes that it is somehow un-American to try to settle by conference what we have been unable to settle on the battlefield for 11 years of fighting, in the expenditure of \$4 billion of American resources, and in the loss of several hundred of the cream of our American fighting force."

—Sen. McGovern (D., S.D.), in the Senate, Feb. 18.

that we make it clear that we intend to tolerate no breaches of that line; that we do not intend to negotiate violations of the line. . . .

Senator CHURCH: If our purpose is to cause the North Vietnamese to give up their interest in the war that the Vietcong is waging against the Saigon Government, I would forecast right now that they will not do it. They have been engaged for many years in their revolution, first, to throw out the French. . . . I have no confidence that bombing would make it happen. We bombed North Korea. We bombed it in an effort to break the fighting will of the Communists there—the most thorough bombing, perhaps, that has ever taken place in history. We bombed their roads; we bombed their buildings; we bombed their bridges; we bombed their industry. But we never broke the Communist will to fight.

The Senator is calling on them to quit and accept defeat, total and complete, in the matter of South Vietnam, as the condition of further talks. If that could be accomplished, there would be no occasion for further talks. If our purpose is to cut off the North Vietnamese and to maintain an impregnable 17th parallel, we shall find that this will have to be done with American troops, as we found in Korea.

McGee, Defending Tough Policy, Dismisses Vietnamese People As Secondary

"In Greece [in 1947] . . . it is true, the government did not have the support of the people. For the most part Greece was in the throes of a civil war, on a considerably higher level than the one now going on in Vietnam, but civil war nonetheless. The question that took first priority was the encroachment from the north of Communist forces across the border. We had to back not the good guys but the bad guys in Greece, to put it simply in the vernacular. We did not back the people. We backed the monarchy; we backed those who happened to be in the driver's seat at that moment. We took a chance of Greece raising its level of economy and in improving the quality of its own government. It was a case of putting first things first. . . . "I believe we would all get closer to the nub of the real

problem that faces us now in Asia if we would not talk so much about communism and talk more about power politics. . . . That empire in southeast Asia is the last large resource area outside the control of any one of the major powers on the globe. In the hands of one it becomes a power calculation that can upset the balance in the world. Before we can talk or negotiate, we must make certain that there is no equivocation about where we stand. . . .

"I believe that the condition of the Vietnamese people, and the direction in which their future may be going, are at this stage secondary, not primary. I believe that is where we become confused. We must keep first things first, as we did in Greece in the civil war there."

—Sen. McGee (D. Wyo.), in the Senate, Feb. 17.

If Flexibility Works In East Europe, Why Not Try It In East Asia?

(Continued from Page One)

Perhaps this is a little unfair to McNamara. His formal presentation seems to have been prepared before the White House decided on the policy of reprisal advocated by Goldwater, Nixon and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. McNamara says only "we should continue our existing programs" in Vietnam "and encourage other friendly nations to increase the scope of their assistance." The wording suggests the earlier policy of trying to win the war in South Vietnam. The new policy of raising the ante by striking at targets outside it may plunge us into a game of Russian roulette. The scale of that game, if our bluff is called and it gets out of hand, is shown by McNamara's figures on nuclear war. We can end up by winning Southeast Asia while losing North America. The fact that Russia and China would also be destroyed is news that should bring cheers in any good insane asylum.

A Costly Blind Spot

The refusal to see negotiation as an alternative is made the more striking by another aspect of the McNamara report. This report is also an annual world-wide survey of our foreign policy. That it should come from the Secretary of Defense attests the extent to which diplomacy has become subordinate to the military. In this survey, McNamara takes great satisfaction in the extent to which our new friendly and flexible policy of trade and better relations with the East European Communist States has served our national interests, weakening their bonds with Moscow and encouraging their liberalization. But nowhere does he ask us to consider whether a similar policy toward China and South Vietnam might not be worth trying. This is a blind spot and it is a blind spot which may cost us dearly.

The debate over what to do in Southeast Asia is really a debate between two views of our future relations with China. One side believes that sooner or later we must make war on China. The other side believes that sooner or later we must make peace with China. One side says the longer war is delayed the harder it will be to win. The other side says the longer peace is delayed the harder it will be to negotiate. We

A Truth The U.S. Recognizes Only In Private

"The mistake of the Americans is to think that the Vietnamese affair is simply a phase of the struggle between the Communist and capitalist worlds and to believe that if it were not for a Machiavellian plot by China, nothing would happen in Vietnam. But today the rebellion in Vietnam is popular. North Vietnam and China support it, but it has a life of its own. Neither Hanoi nor Peking commands the Vietcong."

—Former French Premier Edgar Faure at an Anglo-American press luncheon in Paris, Figaro, Feb. 17.

"The private response of officials to the appeals for negotiation has been the question, 'When and with whom?' It is based on a belief that the non-Communist forces in South Vietnam are too weak politically and militarily to negotiate anything except the surrender of their country to the Vietcong. The question is based, too, on a belief that even if the Soviet Union, Communist China and North Vietnam were interested in guaranteeing the 'neutrality' of South Vietnam, they could not persuade the Vietcong to lay down their arms without assuring them a dominant position in future Saigon governments—the equivalent in Washington's eyes of defeat."

—"Washington Still Rules Out Any Vietnam Negotiations" by Max Frankel in New York Times, Feb. 18.

What, then, is left of the official line that all would be well if only Peking and Hanoi left their neighbors alone?

believe the most urgent measure required to defend America and safeguard its future is to make our people realize the facts of nuclear life, and the inescapable necessity of negotiation. We have no greater interest now than the preservation of peace. Even if we could win a war with China without a nuclear holocaust, we would still have to negotiate peace with China when it was over. If we won, it might not be a Communist China, but it would still be China, and any China will resent our effort to make its neighbors in Southeast Asia an American preserve. China's expansionism, it would be well to remember, is somewhat older than Marxism-Leninism, though only by about 5,000 years.

Correction: In our Feb. 15 report of Eastland's speech a reference to Jesse Gray was incorrectly reported as Jesse Gordon. **Postscript:** We'll send free copies of this week's issue to your friends if you send stamped addressed long envelopes.

I. F. Stone's Weekly 5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20015

Please renew (or enter) a sub for the enclosed \$5:

Name

Street

CityZone.....State.....

3/1/65

For the enclosed \$5 send a gift sub to:

(To) Name

Street

CityZone.....State.....

For \$5.35 extra send I. F. Stone's *The Haunted Fifties*

Indicate if announcement wished

I. F. Stone's Weekly

5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20015

Second class
postage paid
at
Washington, D. C.

NEWSPAPER

I. F. Stone's Weekly. Second Class Postage Paid at Washington, D. C. Published every Monday except the last week in December and the first week in January and Bi-Weekly during July and August at 5618 Nebraska Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C. An independent weekly published and edited by I. F. Stone; Circulation Manager, Esther M. Stone. Subscription: \$5 in the U.S.; \$6 in Canada; \$10 elsewhere. Air Mail rates: \$15 to Europe; \$20 to Israel, Asia and Africa.